

Oakes Newsletter

51 Years of Service



Dear Friends and Supporters:

Greetings from beautiful Big Bear and Camp Oakes...

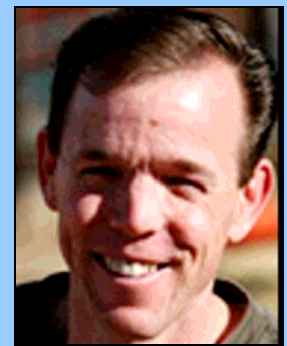
The past couple of months have been a bit quieter around camp, as we have shifted from "summer mode" to taking care of guests primarily on weekends. With the solitude comes opportunity for planning and reflection. On a recent occasion, I was reminded of a camper from this summer who desperately wanted to leave camp after being here for only a couple of hours. This young girl, living in a foster home, arrived with her group on a Saturday afternoon, and discovered she did not know anyone. She quickly expressed her desire to leave and return "home". The director of the group, along with her counselor, spent time with her, encouraging her to stay and create one of the most memorable summers of her life. She reluctantly agreed, but was bound and determined to have a miserable time. Throughout the week, she proved to be a challenge to the leaders, but her college age counselor was just as determined to love her and encourage her. On Saturday, as she was preparing to board the bus for the ride home, this young girl joyfully admitted that her week long camp experience was a definite highlight in her life. She thanked those who encouraged her to stay, and especially her counselor who showed love and concern for her in spite of her behavior.

Stories such as this one are becoming more the "norm" rather than the exception. Many of the children and youth we work with today are afraid to leave their comfort zones. They are terrified of trying new things for fear of failure. I am so thankful to be a part of an organization that not only encourages the concept of conquering your fears, but also provides a safe, caring environment where it can take place. It is evident to me that YMCA Camp Oakes is truly building strong kids!

With Gratitude,

Jeff Darling

A YMCA camping experience is about developing positive values, making new friends, learning new skills, and having fun!



**How green
Is your valley. . .**

Air leaks can increase your heating and cooling bill by 10%. Caulking and sealing them can cut your carbon footprint by 865 pounds per year!

Easter Seals

2009 marks the 36th year of operation for this Easter Seals Camp. Easter Seals serves people with disabilities between the ages of 9 and 60.

YMCA Camp Oakes and Easter Seals have a long history of working together to provide people with disabilities the same opportunities that their non-disabled peers enjoy.

Each year people from around the Country convene in the San

Bernardino Mountain community to experience "Utopia".

People of all abilities gather to revel in a full outdoor experience where they enjoy horseback riding, canoeing, swimming, arts and crafts, target sports, high and low ropes courses, dancing or rocking' out at concerts.



YMCA of Orange



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We build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities

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**Today's mighty oak is just
yesterday's nut that held its
ground. - Anonymous.**

Camp Oakes Mission

The mission of Camp Oakes is to provide a unique outdoor experience for men, women, boys and girls, in a quality facility, served by professional staff with unparalleled excellence.

ACA Accreditation

An ACA accreditation means Camp Oakes cares enough to undergo a thorough review of its operation- from staff qualifications and training to emergency management. The American Camping Association collaborates with experts from youth-serving agencies to assure that current practices reflect the most up-to-date standards in camp operation.



Wish List

Portable Projector - \$450
(200) Dining Hall Chairs - \$45/ea
Snow Plow - \$4,000
(2) Commercial Vacuum \$400/each
(20) Riding Helmets - \$50/ea
(10) Saddles - \$400/ea
Folding Machine - \$350
(20) Paintball Markers \$86/ea
(25) Ropes Course Harness \$41/ea
Wand Mixer (Soup/Smoothies) \$700

Gifts Received

Wireless Internet - \$400
Reception Desk - \$500
Office Chairs (2) - \$100/each

The Case for Camp

Why Kids Need It

Now More Than Ever (Part 2)

The camp experience embraces the natural environment. While children have fewer and fewer opportunities to be outdoors, the camp experience advances the outdoor learning environment. As we become more concerned about saving the planet, we run out and make DVDs and videos about it. But the environment needs to be experienced to be appreciated. Kids need to catch tadpoles in the creek, wander among the trees, and feel the sun on their faces to understand the importance of those things. What happens to a generation that may grow up not seeing stars in the dark of the night?

Camp creates future leaders. The camp experience offers kids a close-up look at compassionate leadership through the camp director, counselors, resident nutritionist, and other camp personnel. And kids get loads of opportunities to practice being a leader themselves – song leader, lunch table leader, team captain, the list goes on and on.

Camp is an equal opportunity life changer. It addresses universal childhood needs not specific to a particular racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group. Nobody is left out. It's all about childhood development.

Camp has a lasting impact. One of the greatest gifts you can give a child is a sense of success and achievement. Camp teaches kids how to be active participants, ask questions, ask for help, and try new things. They leave understanding that it's okay to feel a little uncomfortable sometimes, because that's generally what happens when you're getting ready to learn something. The camp experience translates back in real world experience – in an "I can" attitude.

We need to advocate for our young people. We should promote opportunities for kids – give them camp experiences that serve as an antidote for the world's challenges. We need to recognize this is not a series of frivolous activities. We often think if it looks like fun it must be unimportant, but "fun" is a young person's "work" – to learn, to grow, to be productive, creative, and happy. If they don't do that work, they won't turn into healthy adults.

Now more than ever, kids need camp.

Construction Update 2009

At the start of September, we were finally ready to undertake a project that was long overdue. As per the San Bernardino County Fire Department, Camp Oakes was to replace the existing camp-wide fire suppression system with a new one. The new one would include 4000' of underground fire line, 8 new fire hydrants, a 1500 gpm diesel pump, and a new 151,000-gallon water tank. The entire project would bring a price tag of nearly \$500,000 dollars. Due to the generosity of so many that contributed to our Capital Campaign, we were able to do this project, and as of the date this was written, nearly 80% of the project is complete. We anticipate full completion before December 31 of this year.

